



# TOWN OF NEW LONDON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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## **APPROVED Minutes of the March 15, 2011 Conservation Commission Meeting**

**MEMBERS PRESENT: Bob Brown (Chairman), Ruth White, Andy Deegan, Dan Allen, Sue Clough, Terry Dancy, Laura Alexander, Peter Stanley (Zoning Board Administrator)**

**MEMBERS ABSENT: Emma Crane, Vicki Koron, Bob Crane (Webmaster)**

**OTHERS PRESENT: Charlie Hirshberg from CLD Engineers**

Chair Brown called the meeting to order at 9:30am.

### 1. CLD Engineers – Charlie Hirshberg (on behalf of the 177 Poor Road Trust TM 091, Lot 005).

Mr. Hirshberg was there to speak on behalf of the Peelers, regarding a permit by notification for the crossing of poorly drained wetland area for a sewer force main to go to a new leach field. He passed out maps to give everyone a visual. This is the house that used to belong to Perry Wheat (?). Years ago, he tried to find the system from Perry. They know that the tank is somewhere on the southerly side of the driveway and they had had some problems with it earlier. The property has a lot of low areas and wetlands. They were proposing to put the leach field on a parcel that is higher than the other places on the property and is the best place they could find. Because they are not 75' off of the wetland, New London's requirement, and because it is classified as a "poorly drained wetland" by the DES they require the field to be no closer than 50' from the wetland, they are proposing a Clean Solution System. Mr. Stanley explained that the Clean Solution System is a pre-treatment system that is aerobic versus anaerobic. There is much less of a field required and it is better for neighboring lake water quality. Mr. Hirshberg explained that they don't even call the field a leach field, as it is sort of like a leach field in a box with pumps, chambers and aerators. They claim that what comes out of the tank is better than the effluent that comes out of a traditional leach field. He has observed that the effluent comes out relatively clear without suspended solids. Mr. Stanley said that there are quite a few of these systems in Town, but the town requires that the system is maintained yearly by the company it was purchased from.

Mr. Stanley went on to add that they need a zoning variance as components are closer than 75' to wetlands, and in addition there is a special exception needed to cross the wetland with the pipe. He was assuming there would be no joints in the wetland. Mr. Hirshberg agreed that this would be the case. He also indicated that there are more and more of these types of systems going in to lakefront lots in the New London area.

Mr. Stanley asked if this would be replacing a failing system. Mr. Hirshberg said that they have been using the system and they have not found any surfacing effluent. He informed them of a new definition as to what a failure is: contaminating ground water, it is considered a failure. Mr. Stanley said that this system has not been declared a failure and could keep going, but he felt this was a good solution.

Mr. Deegan asked what the impacted square footage of the wetland would be. Mr. Hirshberg answered that it was 103’.

Mr. Stanley advised that when Mr. Hirshberg appears before the ZBA for the special exception and the variance, they are going to want to know what the Conservation Commission had to say about this issue.

Chair Brown said it looked like the tank would be about 40’ from the well. Mr. Hirshberg said that the DES requires a waiver for this. Mr. Allen asked if they could shift it a bit east. Mr. Hirshberg said that they could potentially do this. They try to maximize the distance to both the wetlands and the well. They would rather not get closer to the wetlands if possible. Chair Brown noted that the distance of the discharge line was quite a ways. He asked what the approximate depth was and what the disturbance would be. Mr. Hirshberg said that they have to go across the wetland and then have to go down under the existing bridge. Systems are typically set up to drain back but when they have a low point, it doesn’t drain properly. They need to have a depth that is adequate for frost protection. Therefore the line is deeper than traditional lines. He added that they also insulate.

Chair Brown asked how wet the land was and whether it would support a machine to dig the trench. Mr. Hirshberg said that where they are digging is one of the drier points on the lot. The area is the narrowest crossing and it is poorly drained, versus very poorly drained. He has not seen surface water, himself in this area. The wetland can be walked on. They plan to restore the area after they are done digging. Typically they put the top soil back on top after the digging so the vegetation can continue to grow.

Mr. Stanley offered that some people do a better job with this than others. Mr. Hirshberg said he wasn’t sure they had chosen anyone yet. Mr. Stanley said that there is one contractor he would like not to see involved, as they do not follow the guidelines that Mr. Hirshberg had shared. They agreed to talk privately about this at a later time.

Mr. Hirshberg said that this project does involve an addition to the home. The builder is out of Norwich, Vermont. Mr. Stanley said that he will talk to the contractor involved to make sure they follow appropriate guidelines.

Mr. Hirshberg offered that while it is not being used in this case, directional drilling may be advantageous when having to drill through large wetlands. He has recently been involved in such a project where they had to drill a length of 1,400’ under Mascoma Lake.

Mr. Stanley said that they are looking at a permit by notification by the state, special exception for physical wetland crossing, and variance for the proximity to the wetlands of the various components of the system, including the tanks, the line and the field, itself. Mr. Hirshberg said the state requires septic, wetlands and shoreline approval.

Mr. Dancy asked about the existing drainage field and its location. Mr. Hirshberg said that they knew the approximate location, but it was very old and difficult to find. The new system is much better than what is there now.

Mr. Hirshberg said there is a structure that looked like a well in it, but it doesn't smell like fresh water. No one seemed to know what it was or if effluent had been pumped into it. He added that there was a lot of abandoned pipe in that area and they are just trying to improve upon what is there.

Permit by notification requires a signoff by the Conservation Commission. Mr. Deegan felt this was a better system, crossing at the smallest spot and impacting the least amount and is better than what is there. Ms. Clough agreed with Mr. Deegan's thoughts.

**IT WAS MOVED (Dan Allen) AND SECONDED (Andy Deegan) to approve the proposal to gain permit by notification. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

2. Review and approve minutes  
Meeting of February 15, 2011

**IT WAS MOVED (Laura Alexander) AND SECONDED (Andy Deegan) to approve the minutes of February 15, 2011, as circulated. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Special Hearing on February 16, 2011

**IT WAS MOVED (Terry Dancy) AND SECONDED (Sue Clough) to approve the special hearing minutes of February 16, 2011, as circulated. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

3. Budget- 2010, 2011/12

Chair Brown said that they had two encumbered projects. The first was the forestry plan, which Mr. Stanley said he would get in touch with (Clayton Platt?) that day to check on the progress of it. The second was the Phillips Preserve debris removal. Mr. Stanley said that would not happen until summer.

Chair Brown noted that the 2011/12 budget was approved.

4. CIP

Chair Brown noted that they had been granted \$10,000.

5. Town Meeting

Chair Brown offered that "hindsight is 20/20" while referring to the warrant articles that did not pass for Conservation Commission efforts. He felt they should take time to regroup and figure out what they want to do and how to do it. It seemed that the wording of the RSA was confusing to a lot of people. Mr. Deegan said they don't have a choice and that is what they have to say. He felt the biggest issue was that they should have given an example, such as Black Mountain. Chair Brown said that because it was kind of confusing and if it had been connected to a specific project, it would have passed. Mr. Dancy said the thing that was not understood was the three items were part of a package. He thought that in the introduction if it had been explained in this

way, and showing that it would give more economic use of their capital reserve and conserving property at the same time, more people would have understood. Mr. Stanley agreed that they need visuals to help people understand. Chair Brown suggested having some informational meetings and perhaps write some articles to talk it up.

Chair Brown noted a couple of attendees at Town Meeting who spoke against the RSAs and perhaps they should invite those people to a meeting when they get to that point. Mr. Deegan said they should talk to Rotary to get them on board and that it makes sense fiscally to do this. It is a savings to the town. If they can show them that it will save the town money in the long run, the people who were initially against the RSAs, will come around to see that easements are a good thing.

Ms. Alexander volunteered to come up with a presentation for next year's Town Meeting with visuals and educational information.

Mr. Deegan said that the two main arguments were that it was confusing, and the other was that it was a slippery slope. He didn't know what the concern was whether they would have too much power, or that it would be fiscally irresponsible. He felt they should find the counter arguments against these negative beliefs.

Mr. Stanley felt that next year they should just try to get the RSA passed that had to do with giving contributions to qualified town organizations.

Ms. Koron suggested that whoever is going to work on the presentation, not wait until next December to start on it. They have a lot of enthusiasm now and figure out what they are going to do and then work on it to finalize it at the end of the year. Mr. Stanley suggested presenting to each of the lake associations. He felt they could make an impact there.

Mr. Deegan volunteered to write up something about their basic arguments to review, which will have examples. He added that they should do trial runs with groups such as rotary and others to get more people on board with their ideas. He felt the biggest problem was that people didn't understand it.

Mr. Stanley said that it gets forgotten that many very-well used conserved properties, such as the low plain and the Cricenti Bog were purchased and they were not donated.

## 6. CC Land Acquisitions

Chair Brown said at the last meeting Mr. Stanley led them through looking through all the parcels on their radar screen to come up with 15-16 pieces that they'd like to conserve. They wish to send letters to the property owners letting them know that their land is of interest to conservation. He asked if there were two or three people who would work on drafting the letter. Mr. Stanley said he would help with it and asked for ideas from others in the group. Mr. Dancy said they should make sure to mention purchase and easement possibilities in the letter. Ms. Clough said she thought there were still some people confused as to the difference between an outright purchase and an easement. Mr. Deegan said that ASPLT is looking to have some workshops about easements and what they are. He wondered if they would like to have such a

workshop in New London. If so, they could mention the workshop in the letters to the land owners. It was agreed that a workshop held during the summer would be a good idea, as people walk about and use the conserved land more often during that time of the year.

Chair Brown said that The Denies hosted a celebration of the Messer Pond Natural Area easement. Debbie Stanley spoke and did a great job talking in depth about easements and the whole process. He didn't think it was particularly well attended by the Messer Pond Protective Association, but others from Andover and surrounding areas came. He felt it was a very good program.

Chair Brown said he had contacted the Messer Pond Protective Association to see if he could have some time at their next meeting to talk about their efforts for Town Meeting but was told that he could have some time at the end of the meeting, which would be ending around 9pm. He did not go.

Ms. Clough said there are many people who think that ASPLT does it all and think it is not necessary to support the town's Conservation Commission. She felt that needed to come out. Mr. Stanley said that they are facing tough economic times and in the past, the Conservation Commission didn't have a problem getting support. He felt it should get back to that point.

Chair Brown said he spoke with Ms. Levine about their plans to send letters to the property owners on their list. She had no problem with their plan.

### 7. Trails & Projects

Mr. Allen said they lost a bridge on the Pingree Connector. He said that it is under ice currently and he thinks they can get the stringers back. He wanted to know if they want to put a bridge right now and use those stringers for something else later on. Currently, they have a trail that is impassible. The bridge is about 100 yards from Pingree Road and high water lifted it off of its foundation. It was not held down by cable because no one expected the water to rise that high. Chair Brown thought it was a difficult time of year to do this work. Ms. Clough thought people could go along Coco's Path to get further up the trail but didn't think the access to Pingree Road was necessary.

Ms. Clough said that her husband could move a sign to direct people along Coco's Path, as the bridge makes that section of Pingree Connector impassible. She thought Mark Vernon would be happy to help with the construction of a new bridge when the time came.

Mr. Allen said he would like to take down some trees on the Norman Trail. He said he would first identify the trees and then have Ruth White look at them. She agreed to do so. He said most of them are small firs, between 2-6" in diameter. The others are mostly dead maple of about 10-12" in diameter.

Mr. Allen said that on the Norman Trail, someone has created troll faces on two trees. He wanted to take them down and asked what others thought of that. Ms. Clough wondered if this was part of a geo cache or other activity for children that they don't know about. Ms. White said the geo

cache wouldn't have the faces but it would be more of an elementary school project. Mr. Allen said he would take them down.

**(Volunteers) Scott W. Ellison - Fieldstone Lane**

Chair Brown said he is in an attorney in Manchester and his wife is an immigration attorney for Dartmouth College. He seems like a young, eager guy who might have some time to help with trails.

Chair Brown said that Steven Allenby, 28 Lamson Lane, works from home has volunteered to work during the week on trails.

Ms. White asked if a letter had gone out to the adopters reminding them to get out in April to assess the damage from the winter. Mr. Deegan said he would get it done. Chair Brown asked if they could get email addresses to add to this list. Mr. Deegan said that it would be most helpful to get that info and would be cheaper than sending letters.

Ms. Clough said that as a monitor, she prefers to get a letter. An email from the town is likely to get lost among the other emails that are sent to them each day. Chair Brown said the list is small enough that a letter can still be sent to people. Ms. Clough felt there should be a schedule for adopters to follow. For example, by the 15<sup>th</sup> of August or September they should have sent in a report about their trail(s). She felt there needed to be more interaction with the Conservation Commission. Chair Brown thought perhaps they needed to take more initiative to work more with the adopters on their trails.

**Trail work intern**

Chair Brown said that this position was approved through their budget. He said that they should look at getting a couple of ads out in the shopper soon. Ms. Alexander asked for a job description to be sent to her at Colby-Sawyer College as she has students looking for internships. Chair Brown thought that perhaps Mr. Allen could help them come up with what they expect from the individual. He spoke with Ms. Levine a bit about guidelines for operating equipment. There is a policy he will obtain, but it has to do with training and the person being comfortable doing what it is they are doing. He wouldn't expect someone to go out and operate power equipment alone, but could operate such machinery as part of a work detail.

Mr. Stanley said that if they don't follow some sort of invitational or screening process, they are liable to come under scrutiny from someone. This was understood.

Mr. Dancy offered they should include the working period and the pay. Chair Brown wondered if they needed to give the pay information up front. Mr. Stanley said that he didn't think that was necessary, but to let them apply for the position first to show their interest. He added that he didn't think that under any circumstance, anyone should be sent alone into the woods with a chain saw. This was agreed upon by all. Mr. Deegan added that they should take a chainsaw safety class. Chair Brown said he would draft a brief and general job description for them to review. Mr. Stanley said that they should include an email address to which to send applications, and they should post the position at the high school and the college.

**MCDC work dates Fridays, June 3, 10 & October 7, 17, 2011.**

Chair Brown noted that the Merrimac County of Department of Corrections would be coming at the above dates for work detail. 4-8 people would be in the crew. Chair Brown said that Ben Forge, the contact person for this program, said they send crews to Sutton year-round. He mentioned that if New London had a well-defined project, the crew is supervised so people from the Conservation Commission don't have to be there. They are looking for labor and don't want to have to electrical or plumbing work.

**Merrimac County Diversion Program**

Chair Brown said that regarding the Merrimac County Diversion Program, he has done nothing as far as firming up dates. He is detecting some concerns about the reliability and dependability of the group that comes. It is hard to get much done with two or three people.

8. Programs

Mr. Deegan asked if there was a back-up on the Demming property next to Cook. He said that he and his wife will be doing a dragon fly workshop there in July and Lagenau forest in August. He directed the Conservation Commission to the ASPLT website for details.

9. Mail

Chair Brown signed the monitoring report for the ASPLT regarding the Phillips Property and gave it to Mr. Deegan.

10. Calendar events

Mr. Deegan said that Ms. Clough had any objection of them leading a dog walk on the Cook property. They will allow no more than 15 dogs and their owners will clean up after themselves. It will be Wednesday, April 20<sup>th</sup>. There were no objections.

11. Other

Chair Brown said that in the Annual Report he made reference to the study done by Colby-Sawyer College. He wondered if it was appropriate to give a copy of the report to the six students who were mentioned by name. Ms. Alexander thought they would love it.

12. Next meeting date, April 19, 2011 (Tuesday)

There were no objections.

Chair Brown said that he is planning to be away between July 16th and September 25th and will miss three meetings.

**IT WAS MOVED (Laura Alexander) AND SECONDED (Andy Deegan) to adjourn the meeting. THE MOTION WAS APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 11:00am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristy Heath, Recording Secretary  
Town of New London